

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
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O 281115Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2271

S E C R E T JIDDA 6003

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR ACTING ASST. SECRETARY SOBER

DEPARTMENT PASS DOD SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR GENERAL GRIBBLE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SA, US, MASS, MARR

SUBJECT: ASSIGNMENT OF JEWS TO CORPS OF ENGINEERS

1. I TOLD PRINCE SAUD AUG 26 THAT THE PRESSURE FROM JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS ON THE CONGRESS AND THE WHITE HOUSE TO ASSIGN JEWS TO SAUDI ARABIA WAS BECOMING VERY INTENSE. WE WERE THEREFORE CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF ASSIGNMENT OF AN AMERICAN OF THE JEWISH FAITH TO THE EMBASSY AND TO THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS. I EMPHASIZED THAT NO DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN; I WAS SPEAKING TO HIM PRIVATELY TO GET HIS PRIVATE REACTION AND ASKED HIM NOT RPT NOT TO DISCUSS THIS FURTHER WITH ANY OTHER SAUDI OFFICIALS. HE AGREED NOT TO MENTION IT TO OTHERS.

2. SAUD SAID THAT THE SAUDI VISA LAWS MIGHT BE ANTIQUATED, THAT PERHAPS THEY SHOULD BE CHANGED, THAT PERHAPS INDEED THEY WOULD BE CHANGED SOON. HE SAID I HAD TALKED REPEATEDLY WITH HIM AND PRINCE FAHD ABOUT THIS MATTER AND THAT I HAD NOT BEEN DISCOURAGED. NEITHER, HE SAID, HAD I HAD MUCH DIFFICULTY IN GETTING JEWS INTO THE KINGDOM WHENEVER I HAD ASKED. BUT FOR THE UNITED STATES TO TRY TO FORCE SAUDI ARABIA TO CHANGE ITS VISA PRACTICES WOULD BE QUITE A DIFFERENT

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MATTER. IF WE WERE TO ASSIGN JEWISH OFFICERS TO THE

CORPS, THE SAUDIS WILL NOT ACCEPT THEM. IF WE THEN WERE TO WITHDRAW THE CORPS FROM THE COUNTRY IN PROTEST, THEN SO BE IT.

3. SAUDI SAID THAT WE HAVE OUR OWN RESTRICTIVE VISA PRACTICES. RESIDENTS OF THE SOVIET UNION ARE CONSIDERED COMMUNISTS AND IF THEY ARE ADMITTED THEY ARE CAREFULLY OBSERVED. VISAS FOR PALESTINIANS ARE ALWAYS CAREFULLY SCREENED, MANY ARE REFUSED IF THE AMERICANS SUSPECT THEY ARE RADICALS. HE ASKED HOW THEY CAN ASSUME THAT A JEW WHO DEMANDS TO LIVE IN SAUDI ARABIA DOES NOT RPT NOT INTEND TO WORK FOR ISRAEL. HE SAID THAT SAUDI ARABIA WAS NOT NOTED FOR THE MILDNESS OF ITS CLIMATE, FOR ITS ACTIVE CULTURAL LIFE OR THE GAIETY OF ITS SOCIETY. AND A COLONEL CAN MAKE AS MUCH BEING IN ARKANSAS OR GERMANY AS HE DOES IN RIYADH. I SAID WE WOULD ASSUME WITHOUT ANY QUESTION THAT ANY AMERICAN ASSIGNED HERE WOULD BE IN THE SERVICE OF ONE COUNTRY ONLY - THE UNITED STATES. SAUD ASKED THAT HE BE ALLOWED TO DOUBT THIS.

4. IF A JEWISH OFFICER WERE ASSIGNED TO THE EMBASSY, HE SAID HE MIGHT RPT MIGHT BE ACCEPTED BUT HE CERTAINLY COULD NOT BE EFFECTIVE AND THE WORK OF THE ENTIRE EMBASSY WOULD BE COMPROMISED. AS FOR THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS, HE SAID THWM THE CORPS HAD DONE SPLENDID WORK IN THE COUNTRY. AS I KNEW, IT WAS EXTREMELY POPULAR IN SAUDI ARABIA AND THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT WOULD LIKE TO SEE ITS SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES EXPANDED. BUT THE CORPS HAD ALSO BEEN EXTRENVLY VALUABLE TO THE UNITED STATES. IT HAD INCREASED U.S. INFLUENCE IN THE COUNTRY AND, PERHAPS EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT HAD RESULTED IN MAJOR CONTRACTS GIVEN TO AMERICAN FIRMS. WITH THE VASTLY EXPANDED CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM FOR THE COUNTRY, AMERICAN FIRMS OPERATING UNDER THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS COULD HOPE TO GE THE MAJORITY OF THE CTNSTRUCTION CONTRACTS AMOUNTING TO TENS OF BILLIONS OF DOLLARS OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

5. THE CORPS, HOWEVER, IS NOT INDISPENSABLE, HE SAID.

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IF THE UNITED STATES INSISTS ON TRYING TO USE THE GOOD REPUTATION OF THE CORPS IN THE COUNTRY TO FORCE SAUDI ARABIA TO CHANGE ITS VISA PRACTICES, THEN THE CORPS WOULD BE FINISHED. HE SAID THAT SAUDI ARABIA COULD LIVE WITHOUT THE CORPS. THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT THE COUNTRY WOULD BE HURT; THEY WOULD GET AN INFERIOR PRODUCT BUT THE QUESTION OF NATIONAL HONOR WOULD BE AT STAKE. SAUDI ARABIA WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE FORCED

INTO THE HUMILIATING POSITION OF HAVING AMERICAN ZIONISTS PROCLAIMING TO THE WORLD THEY HAD FORCED SAUDI ARABIA TO CHANGE ITS VISA POLICIES. HE SAID IN THE LONG RUN SAUDI ARABIA WOULD SURVIVE QUITE NICELY BUT UNITED STATES COMPANIES WOULD BE HURT AND SAUDI-AMERICAN RELATIONS WOULD VERY LIKELY BE IRREPARABLY DAMAGED. HE ALSO SAID WE COULD FORGET "PERMANENTLY" ABOUT GETTING THE GRADUAL CHANGES IN VISA POLICIES WE HAD DISCUSSED EARLIER IF WE MAKE AN ISSUE OVER THE ASSIGNMENT OF JEWS TO THE CORPS IN SAUDI ARABIA.

6. SAUD SAID THAT WHILE HE WAS TALKING ONLY FOR HIMSELF AND WOULD HONOR HIS AGREEMENT NOT TO DISCUSS IT FURTHER, HE COULD ASSURE ME THAT THE VIEW HE EXPRESSED WOULD BE SHARED BY KING DHALID, PRINCE FAHD, PRINCE ABDALLAH AND "EVERY MEMBER OF THE CABINET." HE HOPED WE WOULD DROP THE SUBJECT.  
AKINS

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED DOD.

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NNN

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